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ABSTRACT

Drawing from the American Association of Community and Junior College's annual fall surveys, this report summarizes selected data about community colleges, their students, and their faculties. Section I focuses on institutional characteristics, tracing the increase in the number of two-year institutions between 1945-46, when there were 315 public and 333 private two-year colleges, and 1986-87, when there were 1,062 public and 162 private institutions. This section also provides 1986-87 data on college size. Section II presents enrollment trends from 1945 to 1986 for private and public institutions, noting the tremendous growth following World War II through the 1970s. Section III highlights student characteristics, including age, gender, ethnicity, part-time status, student educational objectives, degree goals, and academic ability. Section IV outlines faculty characteristics, featuring data on part-time faculty, educational background, age, and salaries; section V offers data on institutional revenues and expenditures; section VI provides information on the number of associate degrees conferred and their economic worth. Finally, section VII looks at community services programs offered at two-year institutions. An 8-item bibliography is included. (EJV)

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American Association of
Community and Junior Colleges

COMMUNITY, TECHNICAL, AND JUNIOR COLLEGES: A SUMMARY OF SELECTED NATIONAL DATA

Prepared by the AACJC Office of Research and Policy Studies
Jim Palmer, Director

1 December 1987

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Introduction

This report summarizes selected data about community colleges, their students, and their faculties. It presents a concise national picture of community, technical, and junior colleges, answering questions frequently asked by the news media and the general public. Unless otherwise specified, the data were derived from AACJC's annual fall surveys. Additional resources are listed at the end of this report.

More complete information will appear in the Statistical Yearbook of Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges, scheduled for publication in the summer of 1988. For further information, or for clarification of data appearing here, please call Jim Palmer, AACJC Director of Research and Policy Studies, at (202) 293-7050.

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I. INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Number of Colleges

Community, technical, and junior colleges--as defined by AACJC --are regionally accredited postsecondary institutions at which the associate degree is the highest credential awarded. In 1945-46 there were 648 such colleges; slightly less than 50 percent (315) were publicly supported. Today, there are 1,224 community, technical, and junior colleges of which only 13 percent (162) are privately operated. Table One illustrates the tremendous postwar growth of this segment of higher education, especially in the years between 1965 and 1975.

Table One
Public and Private Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges:
1945-46 to 1986-87

	Number of Colleges		
Year	Public	Private	Total
1945-46	315	333	648
1955-56	363	272	635
1965-66	503	268	771
1975-76	1,014	216	1,230
1986-87	1,062	162	1,224

College Size

In terms of enrollment size, community, technical, and junior colleges constitute a diverse set of institutions. Enrollments at public community colleges break down approximately as follows:

- 32 percent enroll up to 1,499 students,
- 25 percent enroll 1,500 to 2,999 students,
- 24 percent enroll 3,000 to 6,999 students, and
- 20 percent enroll 7,000 students or more.

Generally, private colleges are smaller:

- 52 percent enroll fewer than 500 students,
- 27 percent enroll 500 to 999 students,
- 10 percent enroll 1,000 to 1,900 students, and
- 11 percent enroll 2,000 students or more.

II. ENROLLMENT TRENDS

As Table Two indicates, postwar enrollments at community, technical, and junior colleges grew tremendously through the 1970s. Between 1965 and 1975, total enrollment grew by 240 percent. Since then, enrollment has increased only sporadically and at a much lower rate. Today, community colleges are a large and well-established segment of American higher education, enrolling approximately 43 percent of the nation's undergraduates and 51 percent of all first-time, entering freshmen (El Khawas and others, forthcoming).

Table Two: Enrollment Trends
1945-1986

	Fall Head Count Enrollment at Community, Technical & Junior Colleges		
Year	Public	Private	Total
1945	216,325	78,150	294,475
1955	683,129	82,422	765,551
1965	1,152,086	140,667	1,292,753
1975	3,921,542	147,737	4,069,279
1976	3,939,173	145,803	4,084,976
1977	4,160,611	149,373	4,309,984
1978	4,159,456	144,602	4,304,058
1979	4,334,344	153,528	4,487,872
1980	4,666,286	159,645	4,825,931
1981	4,742,861	144,814	4,887,675
1982	4,823,003	141,376	4,964,379
1983	4,799,768	148,207	4,947,975
1984	4,702,901	133,918	4,836,819
1985	4,597,838	132,397	4,730,235
1986	4,764,227	126,437	4,890,664

III. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The following highlights detail the characteristics of the diverse student clientele served by community, technical, and junior colleges.

Student Age

Adults of all ages attend community, technical, and junior colleges. According to unpublished data from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges, the mean (average) age of students in for-credit classes at public community colleges 27; the modal age is 19, and the median age 24. Thus, 50 percent of the students are older than the traditional college-age cohort (18 through 24).

Gender

The number of women attending community colleges has grown steadily during the past 17 years. Accounting for 40 percent of all students in Fall 1970, women now account for 53 percent of all enrollees. The growing participation of women in community college education is reflected in statistics on associate degree conferrals. The number of associate degrees awarded to women increased by 49 percent between 1975 and 1985. In contrast, the number awarded to men increased by only six percent (Kroe, 1987).

Ethnicity

According to government figures for 1984, the latest year for which comprehensive data are available, minorities make up 21 percent of all students enrolled at community, technical, and junior colleges, broken down as follows:

- Six percent are Hispanic,
- Four percent are of Asian descent,
- One percent are Native Americans,
- Ten percent are Blacks.

Nonresident aliens make up an additional one percent.

In terms of higher education as a whole, minorities are more likely to attend community, technical, and junior colleges than whites. Enrolling only 36 percent of the nation's white college students, community colleges enroll 54 percent of Hispanic undergraduates, 54 percent of American Indian college students, and 43 percent of Black and Asian college students (Snyder, 1987).

Part-Time Status

In Fall 1986, part-time learners accounted for 63 percent of all students enrolled in credit classes at community colleges, up from 48 percent in 1970, 54 percent in 1976, and 62 percent in 1980. Such growth in the number of part-time students is expected to continue. The Center for Education Statistics estimates that part-time enrollments will increase by seven percent through 1992, while the number of full-time students at community colleges will decline by approximately 10 percent.

The predominance of part-time learners reflects, among other factors, the efforts of community colleges to accommodate adult students with family and job responsibilities. Weekend and evening classes, off-campus learning centers, individualized learning laboratories, and other strategies have been used successfully to attract students who are not in a position to study on a full-time basis.

Student Educational Objectives

As open-admissions institutions, community colleges enroll students with a wide range of educational objectives. In a recent national survey of community college students, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges asked respondents to indicate "What is your primary reason for enrolling at this college at this time?" The students responded as follows:

- 36 percent indicated "preparation for transfer to a four-year college or university";
- 34 percent replied "to acquire skills needed for a new occupation";
- 16 percent answered "to acquire skills needed for a current occupation";
- 15 percent indicated "to fulfill a personal interest"; and
- four percent said "to improve basic English, reading or math skills."

(Some students chose two or more reasons; the percentages do not total to 100.)

Students' educational objectives vary by age and curriculum. For example, 56 percent of the respondents who were 20 or younger indicated "preparation for transfer" as their primary educational objective, compared to only 16 percent of students 33 or older. As for curriculum, 50 percent of all students in liberal arts classes indicated they enrolled to prepare for transfer, compared to only 24 percent of students in applied arts courses such as business, engineering technology, secretarial science, allied health, or criminal justice.

Degree Goals

Data collected for the "High School and Beyond" study confirm that community college students are less likely to aspire to baccalaureate or higher degrees than students at four-year colleges and universities. Of the high school seniors participating in this study, those planning to obtain a baccalaureate degree were more likely to attend a four-year institution than a public community college (59 percent and 16 percent respectively). Only 13 percent of the students who planned to obtain an advanced graduate degree attended a public two-year institution, while 69 percent attended a four-year college or university (El-Khawas and others, forthcoming).

Academic Ability

Data in Table Three, derived from the "High School and Beyond" study, demonstrate that, on average, community college students begin postsecondary studies with lower levels of academic achievement than students at four-year colleges and universities. Only nine percent of high school seniors with an "A" average attend community colleges in the first year after graduation; in contrast, 44 percent of these students attend public four-year colleges and 27 percent attend private four-year colleges.

Table Three
Percentages of High School Seniors Attending Community Colleges and Four-Year Colleges, by High School Grade Point Average

	1980 High School Graduates		
	Students with "A" average	Students with "B" average	Students with "C" average
% attending a public community college in Fall 1980	9%	17%	13%
% attending a public four-year college in Fall 1980	44%	31%	6%
% attending a private four-year college in Fall 1980	27%	11%	3%

Source: El-Khawas and others, forthcoming

It must be remembered that these figures reflect average trends and that community colleges enroll large numbers of academically-able students. Nonetheless, community colleges provide access for a disproportionately large share of students whose academic backgrounds render them unlikely candidates for admission to four-year colleges and universities. In admitting these students and providing remediation and support services where needed, community colleges undertake one of the most difficult tasks facing higher education today.

IV. FACULTY

Part-Time Faculty

One major trend in community college staffing is the growing use of part-time faculty, who now constitute approximately 60 percent of all community college faculty members. The number of part-timers employed at community, technical, and junior colleges has increased steadily since 1970, as Table Four illustrates.

Table Four
Number of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty at Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges, 1970 - 1986

	Full-Time		Part-Time	
Year	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
1973	89,958	59%	61,989	41%
1976	88,277	44%	111,378	56%
1980	104,777	44%	134,064	56%
1986	110,909	40%	164,080	60%

Educational Background

Since the early 1970s, the proportion of community college faculty members holding a doctorate has increased. But, as Table Five illustrates, the master's degree is still the predominant credential.

Table Five
Highest Degree Held by Community College Faculty Members

	Men		Women	
Highest Degree	1973	1984	1973	1984
Bachelor's or less	11%	13%	13%	14%
Master's	74%	50%	73%	61%
First Professional (law, medicine, other)	3%	7%	4%	11%
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	6%	27%	5%	13%
Other doctorate	1%	1%	1%	<1%
None, other, no answer	5%	<1%	4%	<1%

Source: Anderson, 1980; Ottinger, 1987

Age

As Table Six demonstrates, the average age of community college faculty has increased slightly since 1973, especially for men. This aging factor is reflected in other statistics showing that the proportion of male faculty holding the ranks of "associate professor" or "professor" rose from 24 percent in 1973 to 45 percent in 1984. The proportion of women holding these academic ranks rose from 22 percent to 33 percent.

Table Six
Age of Community College Faculty, by Gender: 1973 and 1984

	Men		Women	
Age	1973	1984	1973	1984
Older than 60.	5%	9%	6%	10%
51-60	20%	23%	19%	18%
41-50	36%	39%	34%	37%
36-40	17%	15%	11%	19%
31-35	14%	10%	13%	12%
30 or Younger	6%	3%	13%	4%

Source: Anderson, 1980; Ottinger, 1987.

Faculty Salaries

The average salary for all faculty at community, junior, and technical colleges with faculty rank systems was $30,100 in 1986-87. Full professors earned an average salary of $37,170; associate professors received an average salary of 31,330; assistant professors earned an average of $26,590; and instructors received $22,270. At institutions that do not rank their faculty, the average salary was $31,240. Salaries for unranked faculty ranged from $40,500 to $22,270 (El-Khawas and others, forthcoming).

V. INSTITUTIONAL FINANCES

Revenues

Community college revenues are derived mainly from local and state governments and from student tuition and fees. In 1986, state appropriations accounted for almost half (48 percent) of the revenues received by community, technical, and junior colleges; local government funding accounted for 23 percent; tuition accounted for 16 percent; and federal funds accounted for seven percent (El-Khawas and others, forthcoming).

There are, however, great variations by state. At public community colleges the percent of revenues accounted for by state funds ranges from 81 percent in Nevada to 25 percent in Kansas; the median is 63 percent. The proportion of revenues derived from local governments ranges from 59 percent in Kansas to less than one percent in Kentucky; in 15 states community colleges receive no local government funds at all. Tuition as a percent of revenues ranges from 43 percent in Vermont to four percent in California (Wattenbarger and Mercer, 1987).

During 1986-87, the average cost of attending a public community, technical, and junior college (in terms of tuition) was $687, up from $635 in 1985-86. But, again, annual tuition charges vary greatly by state, ranging from $100 in California to $1,758 in Vermont.

Expenditures

In terms of expenditures per full-time equivalent student, community, junior, and technical colleges devote more than half their resources (61 percent) to instruction, academic support services (including libraries), and student services. This compares to 42 percent at four-year colleges and 38 percent at universities.

Table Seven
Expenditures per FTE Student at Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges, 1983-84

Purpose	Expenditure per FTE Student	Percent of Total
Instruction	$1,663	46%
Institutional Support	519	14%
Plant Operation/Maintenance	415	11%
Student Services	304	8%
Academic Support and Library Services	272	7%
Auxiliary Enterprises	274	7%
Other	190	5%
Total	3,637	99%

Source: Snyder, 1987

After adjusting for inflation, current fund expenditures per full-time eqivalent student at community, technical, and junior colleges increased by only two percent between 1970-71 and 1984-85. In contrast, expenditures per FTE student at four-year colleges increased by 15 percent (El-Khawas and others, forthcoming).

VI. THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Number of Conferrals

Between 1974-75 and 1985-86, the number of associate degrees awarded annually rose from 360,171 to 446,047, an overall increase of 24 percent. To be sure, this increase has not been steady; the number of conferrals dropped in 1978-79 and 1979-80, only to pick up again in 1980-81 and then level off after 1983-84. (See Table Eight.)

But in comparison to other postsecondary credentials, the gains have been significant. During the same time period, the number of awarded bachelor's degrees rose seven percent: from 922,933 to 987,823. The number of master's and doctoral degrees actually declined by one percent from 326,533 to 322,220. Only in the area of "first professional" degrees (such as law, medicine, dentistry, and theology) was there greater growth; "first professional" awards increased by 32 percent from 55,916 in 1974-75 to 73,910 in 1985-86.

Overall, four broad subject areas account for approximately 78 percent of all associate degrees awarded: business and management (26.6 percent); liberal arts or general studies (23.4 percent); health sciences (15.1 percent); and engineering technologies (13.2 percent). As Table Nine demonstrates, gender continued to be an important factor in students' choice of academic major. In particular, women are more likely to enroll in allied health programs while men are more likely to enroll in engineering-related fields.

Economic Value of the Associate Degree

Newly published data from the Bureau of the Census (1987), compare the earnings of adults with different educational credentials and provide a rare national insight into the incomes of associate degree recipients. Summarized in Table Ten, the data substantiate what has long been taken for granted: the higher the academic credential, the higher the average income. Overall, associate degree recipients earn 29 percent more than high school graduates who do not continue their education. In comparison to individuals who complete some postsecondary education without earning a credential, associate degree graduates earn 15 percent more.

Table Eight
Number of Associate Degrees Awarded: 1975 through 1986

Year	Number Awarded	% Increase Over Previous Year
1975	360,171	
1976	391,454	+ 8.6%
1977	406,377	+ 3.8%
1978	412,246	+ 1.4%
1979	402,702	- 2.3%
1980	400,910	- 0.4%
1981	416,377	+ 4.0%
1982	435,515	+ 4.6%
1983	456,441	+ 4.9%
1984	452,416	- 0.9%
1985	454,712	+ 0.5%
1986	446,047	- 1.2%

Source: Stern and Chandler, 1987, p. 102. (1986 data are from unpublished sources at the Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education)

Table Nine
Number of Associate Degrees Awarded in Top-Ranking Fields of Study, 1984-85, by Gender of Recipient

Field of Study	Number Awarded	% of Total
MEN		
Engineering Technologies	54,900	27%
Liberal Arts/General Studies	47,200	23%
Business & Management	41,300	20%
Other Fields	59,500	29%
		100%
WOMEN		
Business & Management	79,400	32%
Health Sciences	60,300	24%
Liberal Arts/General Studies	59,200	23%
Other Fields	52,800	21%
		100%

Source: Kroe, 1987, p. 9

Table Ten
Mean Monthly Income of Persons with Varying Educational Attainment, By Gender and Ethnicity

Educational Attainment	Population Group				
	All Persons	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks
Bachelor's Degree	$1,841	$2,455	$1,148	$1,881	$1,388
Associate Degree	1,346	1,755	959	1,367	1,158
Vocational Certificate	1,219	1,822	923	1,248	860
Some College, No Degree	1,169	1,534	789	1,213	862
High School Diploma	1,045	1,510	684	1,080	765
High School Dropout	693	973	453	734	513

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987

Income advantages of the associate degree are particularly strong for Blacks and women. Blacks with an associate degree earn 51 percent more than Blacks with only a high school diploma. Women with the associate degree earn 40 percent more than women with a high school diploma.

Associate degree holders clearly have an advantage over people who do not complete a postsecondary credential. Students who attend college without earning a bachelor's degree would do better to finish an associate degree program rather than leave college without a credential.

VII. COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Community service programs at community, technical, and junior colleges increasingly focus on the job-related and literacy needs of area residents as opposed to recreational and avocational interests. Job-related community service programs include:

- short-term vocational classes (offered at 98 percent of all public community colleges)
- continuing education for professionals (offered at 94 percent of all public community colleges)
- customized job training (offered at 75 percent of all public community colleges)

Customized job training -- offered on a contractual basis to local businesses and industries -- is one of these colleges' fastest growing community service programs. Another rapidly growing area is adult basic education, now offered at 73 percent of the nation's public community colleges (Cohen, 1987).

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